



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the
United States Attorney
for the
District of Nebraska
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December 3, 2010

United States Attorney Deborah R. Gilg and the Federal Bureau of Investigation
announce the following information for the attention of the media:

Event Triggering this Release:

On December 3, 2010, a United States District Court jury convicted Shanon R. Thomas of First Degree Murder and Use of a Firearm during a Crime of Violence. His sentencing is set for February 28, 2011.

On April 18, 2010, at approximately 6:00 a.m. the lifeless body of Dawn L. Starlin was found lying behind her residence on the Santee Sioux Indian reservation. Starlin had been shot five times. Thomas was a former boyfriend of Starlin and confessed to the murder. Thomas admitted that he had experienced recent difficulties with Starlin. The difficulty related to his former relationship with Starlin and his current relationship with another woman. Thomas indicated that the other woman's house and vehicle had been vandalized on April 17, 2010, and he believed Starlin to be responsible. As a result of the vandalism, Thomas admitted to removing a .22 caliber rifle from his bedroom at his sister's residence and placing it at the crime scene.

After leaving the rifle, Thomas and his current girlfriend went to a bar in Niobrara. After closing, they returned to the girlfriend's residence. The girlfriend's residence was close to Starlin's residence. Thomas reported to investigators that Starlin came out of her residence and sat in a chair near her back door. Thomas related that Starlin said "you guys think you're cute," or words to that effect, and he claimed he snapped. He told investigators that he went over to the rifle, picked it up off the ground, and started pulling the trigger. He stated that he was firing the rifle from his hip and did not know how many times he fired the rifle. Thomas admitted that Starlin was seated in a chair when he started shooting at her. After killing Dawn Starlin, Thomas fled the scene, hid the murder weapon, and concealed himself on the reservation.

Thomas argued at trial that he was only guilty of Manslaughter, not First Degree Murder. The jury rejected that argument finding he had killed Starlin intentionally and with premeditation.

Name of Defendant: Shanon R. Thomas

AKA:

Age: 33

City of residence:

Crime(s) Charged and Potential Penalty: First Degree Murder (Life/\$250,000/5 yrs. TSR/\$100 SA); Use of a Firearm during a Crime of Violence (10 yrs-Life/\$250,000/5 Yr. TSR/\$100 SA).

Specific Location of Alleged Crime: Omaha, Nebraska

Location of Arrest:

Alleged Dollar Loss/Type and Quantity of Drug: N/A

Others Charged in Same Scheme: N/A

Relevant Dates:

Date of Alleged Crime: April 18, 2010

Federal Arrest Date: April 21, 2010

Date Complaint Issued: April 19, 2010

Indictment Returned Date: Superseding Indictment - 5/18/10

Initial Appearance Date: May 24, 2010

Trial and Date(s): November 30, 2010 - December 3, 2010

Sentencing Date: February 28, 2011

Next Court Hearing Type and Date: Sentencing

Assigned Magistrate Judge: F. A. Gossett

Held without Bond, or Released from Custody: Held without Bond

In Continuous Custody Since: April 21, 2010

Assigned District Court Judge: Laurie Smith Camp

Initials of Assigned AUSA/Preparer of THIS Release: SLD